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7 March 1950

TO : US Displaced Persons Commission Hq.,
Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany
APO 757, US Army

Attention: Mr. DeCapua

FROM : James B. Hurley

SUBJECT : The Organisation "DAUGAVAS VANAGI".

1. The routine British Intelligence check on TOMASS, Andrejs, EC 151 136, revealed that he has been a Committee Chairman of the Daugavas Vanagi. The information further stated that this organization was formed for welfare purposes and had no political significance.

2. Regarding this organization the Investigations Section of this office has received the following information:

a. The Daugavas Vanagi (literal translation: "The Eagles of the River Daugavas") was originally formed in 1945 in the Prisoner of War Camp in Zedelheim, Belgium. This POW camp was mainly used for former soldiers of the Baltic Legions. The original objective of this organization, the title of which was taken from a song by a Latvian poet named Eglitis in which he mentions the "Eagles of the River Daugavas", was to assist the crippled Latvian legionnaires. This organization has always been very nationalistic and drew its support, both financial and moral, from Latvians only. Up until 1947 (the beginning of the "Westward Ho" Scheme), the organization had been a loosely knit and poorly administrated body. In 1947 many single Latvian males began to take advantage of the "Westward Ho" Scheme and subsequently the Daugavas Vanagi was properly organized and administrated. These Latvians, who now had work possibilities and a steady income, contributed a substantial amount of money to this organization. As far as is known the headquarters of this organization has since then moved to Detmold, Germany, and representatives are present in a great number of DP camps throughout Germany. The funds of this organization are used for aid to Latvian invalids and widows. A great number of the Latvians still in England contribute to this fund. The British government has permitted legal currency transactions when these contributions are exchanged from British pounds to German Marks. As far as is known, the official name that this organization carries at present in Great Britain is the Daugavas Vanagu Funds (The Fund of the Eagles of the River Daugavas). This organization is not officially recognised by the British Government, although it is not termed subversive.

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b. The Daugavas Vanagi is governed by an elected committee consisting of nine men. The head of the committee is a former colonel of the Latvian Legion (Waffen SS) JANUMS. One of the official distributors of funds at present in Lübeck is a Latvian named CEMINS.

c. From the rise of the Fascist movement until 1934 an organization called "PERKONKRUSTS (The Swastika League) was existing in Latvia. On 15 May 1943, when the Latvian dictator Karlis ULMANIS, executed a coup de etat and assumed power as a dictator. This organization was outlawed but continued to exist illegally. Its leader until 1934 was Gustavs CELMINS. In 1934 Celmins left Latvia and sought refuge in Sweden. In July 1941 Celmins came to Germany and after that country had occupied Latvia he again appeared in Latvia. When the Germans first occupied Latvia members of the Perkonkrusts formed the basic core of the SD. However, no information has been received that Celmins himself was a member of this SD unit. In the middle of 1941 a former Latvian corporal named ARAJS, who had collaborated with the Germans and received from them the rank of Major of the SS, managed to drive out the Perkonkrusts and installed his followers into the above-mentioned SD unit which had its headquarters in the capital of Latvia, Riga. From then until the German collapse in Latvia, Arais and his supporters composed the SD unit in Latvia. Former members of the Perkonkrusts having been driven out by Arais were assigned to the Central Registry which carried files on all Latvians and was located in Riga. They still continued to wear SD uniforms, although they were not considered to be SD members any longer. It has been rumored that Celmins himself has at times been seen in the streets in Riga during the German occupation, wearing an SD uniform. When the Germans withdrew from Latvia because of the Russian advances, Celmins disappeared from sight. At the end of World War II he appeared in Rome, Italy, where he is still a resident.

d. At present various Latvian political factions are vying for a majority of followers so as to be able to set up a government in exile which would be entitled - as a representative of the majority of the Latvian people - to represent them when dealing with the Western Powers. It has been noticed that the Daugavas Vanagi is one of these political factions. Since its membership to-day is not great enough to assert itself as a majority, it has taken to enlist into its rank former members of the Perkonkrusts. It has come to the attention of the investigative section of this office that JANUMS, the leader of the Daugavas Vanagi, has contacted Gustav CELMINS, the former leader of the Perkonkrusts, and is attempting to induce Celmins to join the ranks of the Daugavas Vanagi - and as far as is known he has consented to this - which would naturally put Celmins followers into the fold of the Daugavas Vanagi. It is an established fact that a great number of the former members of the Perkonkrusts are to-day members of the Daugavas Vanagi. It is needless to point out that in due course of time the Daugavas Vanagi will be extremely Fascist in their viewpoints. It should be emphasized that a certain Fascist tendency is already apparent.

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3. It is requested that your office confirm the information received by the Investigations Section of this office and/or furnish this office any additional information regarding the above-mentioned organization. The above outlined information has been received from a usually reliable source.

4. The case of TOMASS, Andrejs, EC 151 136 and NEIMANIS, Livijs-Helena, EC 133 366, will be held in abeyance until your office can inform this office whether or not the above-mentioned organization can be considered to be a movement hostile to the form of government of the United States.

JAMES B. HURLEY
Senior Officer

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